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PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2009
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Sperring called the Planning Committee meeting to order at 9 a.m. Other members in attendance were Commissioners Azumbrado, Chu, Dodd, Giacomini, Haggerty, Halsted, Lempert, MacKenzie, Rubin, Worth and Yeager. Commissioner Bates, Kinsey, and Tissier were also in attendance.

CONSENT CALENDAR: Minutes of January 9, 2009

Commissioner Halsted moved approval, Commissioner Worth seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION 2035: Key Messages Heard on Draft Transportation 2035 Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Ms. Ellen Griffin and Ms. Ashley Nguyen presented a PowerPoint presentation updating the committee on the interagency consultation and public outreach program conducted in Phases 1 and 2, which included the Bay Area on the Move summit, regional workshops, roundtable discussions, telephone and web surveys, person-on-the-street interviews, focus groups, and discussions with resource agencies, Tribal governments, Bay Area Partnership, Joint Policy Committee, ABAG Executive Committee, and MTC Planning Committee. They also highlighted Phase 3 outreach activities, which included two public hearings, two Joint Advisor Workshops, and a roundtable discussion with MTC Commissioners, stakeholders, advisors and partners.

Ms. Griffin highlighted the key messages heard on the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan during the Phase 3 outreach effort from MTC advisors and the public at large:

- mixed views and many questions on the proposed Regional High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Network
- support for the Climate Protection Campaign
- a call to shift funding from the Regional Bicycle Program to the Lifeline Transportation Program
- support funding pedestrian safety program, and
- support for greater emphasis on the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities
- revisit prior investment decisions
- focus more on transit

For each key message heard, Ms. Nguyen presented the MTC response, noting where MTC staff agrees or disagrees with the key message. In addition, Ms. Nguyen reported on the key messages heard on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Draft 2035 Plan and the MTC response, as follows: (1) EIR alternatives need some refinement, and (2) MTC travel forecasting model needs some improvement.

In conclusion, Ms. Nguyen stated that the comment period on the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan closes on March 2, 2009, and staff will present the Proposed Final Air Quality Conformity Analysis, the Proposed Final Environmental Impact Report, and the Proposed Final Transportation 2035 Plan to the Committee for its review and approval on March 13, with anticipated adoption by the full Commission on March 25.

Commissioner Springer called for public comment.

- David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, stated that Key Message # 1: Revisit Prior Investment Decisions is the biggest issue from his organization's viewpoint. He argued that the MTC response is about keeping project sponsors happy by reaffirming these project commitments; ignoring comments from the public and MTC advisors who requested the Commission to revisit these projects; and not responding to climate change.
- Carli Paine, Transform, stated that there is support from the public and decision-makers for the new approach to doing regional transportation planning by using a performance-based approach using outcomes and targets, and requested staff not to abandon it. She also stated that there are several challenges to making that successful, including the need to start now for MTC and CMAs to be on the same page; and need to pursue additional authority to achieve goals of land use and pricing.
- Andrew Casteel, Bay Area Bicycle Coalition, commented on MTC advisors' recommendation for diverting proposed bicycle funding to augment the Lifeline Transportation Program, and instead urged staff to find other sources to fund lifeline transportation. Regarding the Regional Bicycle Plan, he proposed that MTC request that each CMA and other stakeholders submit newer bike routes, which they believe should be included in the new regional bike network.

Commissioner Worth noted that over two-thirds of Contra Costa County residents expressed their support for the 1/2-cent transportation sales tax measure, which represents a strong expression of county engagement and support for these transportation projects. She requested that staff provide information about voter responses to similar measures for other counties.

Mr. Steve Heminger noted that such transportation sales tax ballot measures require two-thirds approval in order to pass, and that staff can provide this information to the Committee. He pointed out that MTC staff reviewed the committed projects for three different screens, the first being "Are they funded by sources over which MTC has no discretionary authority, such as by voter-approved sales tax money?"; secondly, "How far advanced is the project?"; and three, "How many goals in the Regional Transportation Plan does the project address?" When all three screens were applied, staff came up with two projects that had discretionary money and do not meet many Regional Transportation Plan goals. One of the two projects was Doyle Drive, a project that many feel needs to advance regardless. Mr. Heminger also explained that the

performance assessments conducted for this plan demonstrated that trying to change the project mix on the margin does not matter – it does not reduce vehicle travel nor does it reduce CO2 emissions substantially or even appreciably. This is because the region has such a large transportation system and such a huge part of our funding goes just to maintain our existing system. The real focus of the Commission's efforts ought to be on the policy changes relating to land use and pricing - which can make a difference.

Commissioner Spring commented that it is wrong to make statements that the Commission does not support transportation projects with committed funding and that the Commission is disregarding public comment when in fact there is substantial public support in each county for these projects. He challenged those who disagreed with the projects to raise the issue with county voters. He asked staff how much emphasis is put on connections between bikes and transit; that is, does the plan address how you get from the transit stop to the final location? Mr. Doug Kimsey stated that transit connectivity is focused in two categories: the Climate Action Campaign includes a Safe Routes to Transit Program which includes education and capital infrastructure funding support to connect pedestrian, bicycle and transit together, and the Transit Connectivity Plan Implementation work that is underway is implementing way-finding and other connectivity activities to address the "last mile" connection from your transit stop to your final destination.

Commissioner Chu commented on the bike network and stated that staff needs to do outreach to counties/cities that allow them to nominate routes that the Commission can evaluate to see if they fit the criteria.

Commissioner Azumbrado commented on reducing combined housing transportation costs by 10 percent and asked if the focus is by increased costs from cars to transit? He also commented on a discount program - look at potential discount plans that worked elsewhere.

Commissioner MacKenzie agreed that staff move ahead. Pricing and land use strategies need to go through the process.

Commissioner Halsted stated that BCDC needs to know next steps on how to move on pricing and land use strategies. Mr. Heminger stated that the HOT Network is working on the financing approach but needs permission from the state to do it.

Commissioner Spring recommended that staff give the Priority Development Areas the time and focus it deserves. Mr. Heminger concurred, and noted that the Commission's priority for 2009 will be on pricing and land use strategies.

Commissioner Bates was happy to hear about how staff is going to proceed and stated that it is important to have a strategy and to look at staff's own resources to accomplish it.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 13, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.